

REMARKS

This amendment is filed in response to the final office action dated September 5, 2006 and the Examiner's revised proposed amendment to the claims dated October 26, 2006, a copy of which is attached hereto as Attachment A.

Applicant first thanks the Examiner for his proposed amendments to the claims dated October 23, 2006 and October 26, 2006, and his time in discussing the same with Applicant. Pursuant to Applicant's telephone conferences with the Examiner and the Examiner's proposed amendment, the Applicant and the Examiner have agreed that amending the claims according to the Examiner's revised proposed amendment puts each of the pending claims in condition for allowance. As such, Applicant has amended the claims pursuant to the Examiner's suggestions, as indicated in detail below.

Specifically, by this paper, claims 2-4, 6-9, 11, 14-15, 17-19, 26-27, 30-31, 47-48, 55, 57-60, 63-64, and 66-87 have been cancelled, and claims 10, 13, 20-25, 52-54, 56, 61-62, and 65 have been amended. As such, claims 10, 13, 16, 20-25, 28, 52-54, 56, 61-62, and 65 are now pending and at issue in this application. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the various rejections are hereby respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Amendments to the Claims

Pursuant to the Examiner's proposed amendment, Applicant has made the following amendments to the claims, thereby incorporating the Examiner's proposed amendment.

Applicant has amended claims 10 and 20 to include "a combination of a progressive die and a strip of lamination material according to claim 22." Similarly, in claim 21 "A progressive die" has been changed to "A combination of a progressive die and a strip of material." Claim 10 has also been amended to correct a spelling error relative to "zig-zag."

Applicant also amended claim 13 by replacing "at least one slot" with "a plurality of laterally extending slots" and "at least two" with "four angled." Claim 13 has been further amended to include the step of "trimming said outer sides of said discs so as to remove two of said four bridges positioned endmost adjacent said outer sides following said intermediate stations."

Applicant amended claim 22 by changing: (1) "die stations" to "adjacent die stations including an initial die station and additional die stations following said initial die station,"

and (2) “at least two” to “four.” Claim 22 has been further amended to include “at said additional die stations” after “center line” and “said die further includes punches for trimming said outer sides of said sections so as to remove two of said four bridges positioned endmost adjacent said outer sides following said additional die stations.”

Claim 23 has been amended by adding “combination of a” after “A” in line 1, and changing “said at least two” to “said four.”

Claim 24 has been amended by replacing “A progressive die as set forth in claim 3” with “A combination of a progressive die and a strip of lamination material according to claim 22.” Likewise, claim 25 has been amended by replacing “A progressive die as set forth in Claim 24” with “A combination of a progressive die and a strip of lamination material according to claim 24.” Applicant also amended claim 52 by changing “A progressive die according to claim 20” to “A combination of a progressive die and a strip of lamination material according to claim 20.”

Claims 53 and 54 have been amended by adding “combination of a” after “A.”

Applicant amended claim 56 by replacing “An” with “A combination of an” and adding “and a strip of lamination material, said die assembly” after “die assembly.” Claim 56 has been further amended by adding “including an initial die station and additional die stations following said initial die station” after “die stations,” by changing in line 10 “at least one elongate slot” to “a plurality of elongated slots” and “a plurality of” to “four angled,” and by changing in line 11 “said at least one elongate slot” to “said elongate slot” and “said plurality of” to “said four.” Still further, claim 56 has been amended to include after “lateral direction” in line 22 “at said additional die stations, said die assembly further includes punches for trimming outer sides of said discs so as to remove two of said four bridges positioned endmost adjacent said outer sides following said additional die stations.” Further, “said elongate slots and said four” in line 25 has been changed to “said at least one elongate slot and a plurality of.”

Applicant amended claim 61 by changing “60” to “13” and deleting “and accurately locating.” Applicant also amended claim 62 by changing “59” to “13,” changing “the step of providing a plurality of die stations” to “plurality of die stations,” and deleting “providing” in line 2. Applicant amended claim 63 by changing “15” to “13” and “said at least two” to “said four.”

Response to 35 U.S.C. 102 Rejection

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 10 and 56 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 3,388,582 to Wesstrom (Wesstrom). Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection in view of the claim amendments are respectfully requested.

Response to 35 U.S.C. 103 Rejection

Applicant also respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 20-24, 26 and 52-54 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wesstrom in view of Applicant's Admitted Prior Art (AAPA), and claims 13, 16, and 28 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over German Patent 1652940 (the '940 patent) in view of Wesstrom and AAPA. Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections in view of the claim amendments are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and Applicant's teleconferences with the Examiner regarding the same, Applicant respectfully submits that each of the pending claims 10, 13, 16, 20-25, 28, 52-54, 56, 61-62, and 65 is patentable over Wesstrom, the '940 patent and the AAPA, as none of Wesstrom, the '940 patent, and the AAPA alone, or in any combination, discloses or suggests all of the claim limitations of each of the pending claims.

Conclusion

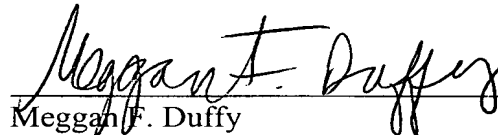
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of each of the pending claims 10, 13, 16, 20-25, 28, 52-54, 56, 61-62, and 65.

No fee is believed due at this time, as this response is filed within three months of the date of the final office action. Nonetheless, the Director's designee is hereby authorized to charge any fee deficiency, or to credit any overpayments, to Deposit Account No. 13-2855 of the undersigned's firm.

If there are any matters that can be discussed by telephone to further the prosecution of this application, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner call the attorney at the number listed below.

December 4, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Meggan F. Duffy", is written over a horizontal line.

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